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Daily Environment Report

March 31, 2017 - Number 61

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Leading the News

Climate Regulation

Power Plant Arguments Canceled as Trump EPA Seeks Lawsuit Pause

A federal appellate court canceled upcoming arguments over the EPA's carbon dioxide limits for power plants after the Trump administration announced plans to review and possibly pull back the regulation (North Dakota v. EPA, D.C. Cir., No. 15-1381, 3/30/17).

News

< i>Chemicals

Indiana Toxic Plume Cases Combined, Stay Federal

Two suits to clean up overlapping toxic plumes from a United Technologies plant and a gas station will be consolidated and litigated in federal court, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana ruled March 28 (Millman v. United Techs. Corp., 2017 BL 100379, N.D. Ind., No. 16-cv-00312, 3/28/17 and Powell v. United Techs. Corp., N.D. Ind., No. 17-cv-00028, 3/28/17).

Chemicals

Lobbying Opportunities Grow as Senate Forms Chemistry Caucus

Chemical manufacturers with views on ways federal education, regulatory, science or other policies may affect their industries have more members of Congress to lobby with the formation of the Senate's Chemistry Caucus.

Climate Change

Indian Carbon Conversion Startup Teams With French Company

Clean Carbon Solutions Ltd., an Indian startup with technology that converts captured greenhouse-gas emissions products, said it entered into a partnership with French water and waste company Veolia Environnement SA.

Climate Change

Northwest Tribes Seek Seat at Table Under Paris Climate Agreement

Some 60 U.S. tribes are seeking a greater voice on global climate change policy by submitting statements in response to the Paris Agreement's call to establish an "indigenous peoples platform."

Climate Policy

Apple, Wal-Mart Stick With Climate Pledges Despite Trump's Pivot

Many of America's biggest corporations including Apple Inc. and Wal-Mart Stores Inc. are sticking by their pledges to fight climate change even as President Donald Trump guts his predecessor's environmental policies.

Climate Policy

EPA Email Error Miscasts Coal Country Senator as Trump Critic

When the Environmental Protection Agency sent out a roundup of quotes praising President Donald Trump's move to dismantle Obama-era climate policies, the first comment stuck out.

Climate Policy

Trump Nixed Social Cost of Carbon, But Courts May Play a Role

President Donald Trump has told federal agencies to ignore an Obama-era metric intended to measure the economic impacts of climate change. The move could land the agencies—eventually—in court.

Coal Mining

China Said to Push Talks to Create \$241 Billion Power Giant

China's state-owned enterprise regulator has asked coal mining giant Shenhua Group Corp. and power generator China Datang Corp. to discuss a possible merger, according to people with knowledge of the situation.

Energy

Advanced Nuclear, Hydropower Bills Head to Senate Floor

A bill to partner advanced nuclear companies with national labs and nine bills to extend the licenses for hydropower plants are among 65 pieces of legislation that the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee advanced to the Senate floor.

Energy

Canadian Coal Production Hit 30-Year Low in 2016

Canadian coal production hit a 30-year low in 2016, the National Energy Board reported.

Energy

Lawmakers Aim to Safeguard Renewable Energy Credits in Tax Overhaul

Democrats and many Republicans are pushing to preserve a pair of recently revived renewable tax credits in a potential comprehensive overhaul of the tax code, lawmakers told Bloomberg BNA.

Energy

Trump Closely Watching Troubled Nuclear Plants That Obama Funded

As Southern Co. opens a review of its troubled nuclear reactors following a bankruptcy filing by contractor Westinghouse Electric Co., the Trump administration has 8.3 billion reasons to be

worried.

Energy

Trump Coal Actions Won't Alter Market Trends: Canadian Minister

The Trump administration's rollback of climate policies and other efforts to boost the U.S. coal industry are unlikely to alter for the foreseeable future a North American energy landscape that favors lower-cost natural gas, Canada's energy minister said March 30.

Enforcement

Former Official Defends EPA as Not a 'Lawless' Agency

The EPA is being misleadingly painted as a "lawless" agency despite court decisions that show the Obama administration stayed within the confines of the law in writing its climate change plan, the agency's former top air official said March 30.

Environmental Reviews

California Renews Authority to Assess Impact of Highway Projects

Newly enacted state legislation saves California from losing its authority to assess the environmental impact of highway projects on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration.

Hazardous Waste

China Readies First Soil Pollution Law, Details Kept Under Wraps

China's central government is expected to release a long-awaited law preventing soil pollution later this year, nearly one year after carrying out an action plan to address widespread soil pollution affecting farmland and former industrial sites, according to officials.

Hazardous Waste

Sherwin-Williams to Pay \$14 Million to Clean Dump Site

The Sherwin-Williams Co. will pay \$14 million to clean up a paint dump in Gibbsboro, N.J., the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced March 30.

International Climate

Trump to Decide on Climate Pact by Late May, Spicer Says

President Donald Trump will decide whether to keep the U.S. in the 2015 Paris climate pact by late May "if not sooner," White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said, in hopes of settling the issue before the president heads to the May 26-27 Group of Seven summit in Italy.

International Issues

India Swings to Net Power Exporter as Modi Looks to Block China

For the first time, India is exporting more electricity than it's importing as Prime Minister Narendra Modi looks to aid smaller neighbors and keep them from a decisive shift toward China.

Oil & Gas

Dakota Access Line Foes Turn to Keystone Pipeline

Environmentalists may have lost their months-long battle against the Dakota Access oil pipeline, but their war against the oil and natural gas industry is far from over.

Pesticides

Activists Redouble Push for California Chlorpyrifos Ban

Environmentalists plan to increase pressure on California officials to prohibit an insecticide used on fruit and vegetables that the Trump administration declined to ban.

Pesticides

Monsanto Delays California Adding Weedkiller to Carcinogens List

Monsanto Co. is asking a California court to delay the addition of glyphosate, the active ingredient in the company's best-selling Roundup weedkiller, to a list of carcinogens under the state's Proposition 65 law (Monsanto v. OEHHA, Cal. Super. Ct., No. 16CECG00183, 3/29/17).

Pipe line Safety

Keystone XL Pipeline Block Sought to Undo Trump's Approval

Environmental groups are seeking to undo President Donald Trump's approval of TransCanada

Corp.'s Keystone XL pipeline after more than eight years of political wrangling on its future and scope.

Renewable Energy

China Solar Exports Start Year Off With 28 Percent Slump

China's solar-energy exports tumbled 28 percent in the first two months of 2017 compared with a year earlier after an increasing numbers of trade disputes dragged on the industry.

Science Policy

House Bill on EPA Science Board Heads to the Senate

A House-passed bill that would change the makeup of a board that offers scientific advice to the EPA may face better odds in the Senate than a previous version last session.

Superfund

EPA, Colorado Town Draft Plan for \$1.4 Million Superfund Cleanup

The EPA and city of Central, Colo., have drafted a plan to further inspect a Superfund site contaminated by lead and arsenic.

Taxes

California Leaders Plan Tax Hikes to Fix Roads

California's Democratic leaders want to fix roads and bridges with higher gasoline taxes and a new fee on electric vehicles that would raise \$5 billion a year.

Water Resources

Brazil Renews Five-Year Water Management Program for \$43 Million

Brazil's National Water Agency (ANA) will provide all 27 states with an additional 135 million reais (\$43.3 million) in funding to continue participating in National Water Management Consolidation Program (Progestao) for another five years.

Special Report

Natural Resources

Louisiana Race to Save Coast Hits Federal Speed Bumps

Louisiana has been losing the battle to keep up with the growing rate of coastal erosion. The centerpiece of its efforts to speed up restoration got a boost from the outgoing Obama administration, but the state recently learned it still will take at least another five years of permit reviews before construction can begin.

Regulatory Agenda

TODAY'S FEDERAL REGISTER

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